

The Growing Years

Healthy Start...where good results begin

Months 33 and 34

Your Child Wants You To Know

How I Grow:

- I can kick a ball.
- I can match objects and pictures.
- I can count 2 – 3 objects.
- I enjoy singing simple songs.
- I can recognize everyday sounds.

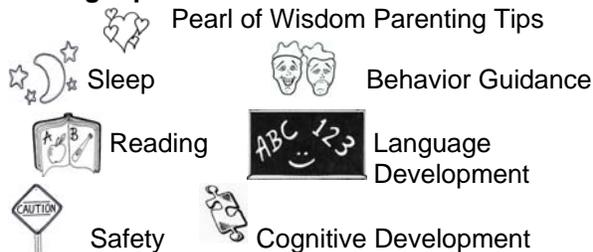
How I Talk:

- I can name 5-6 body parts.
- Sometimes I express my feelings with words.
- I talk and am usually easily understood.
- I use three – five word sentences.

How I Get Along:

- I play next to other children and enjoy being near them.
- I enjoy hearing stories about myself.
- I like to play house and imitate familiar adults.

Watch for these symbols to find articles on the following topics:



This Is the Time for Memories

Children love to learn about themselves and their past. It helps them to feel important and special. A very nice thing you can do for your child and yourselves is to collect and organize reminders of these early years.

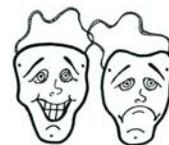
Chances are you have some memory makings already. You can use photographs, birthday

cards, certificates, and so forth, to start a memory book or memory box. Add pictures your child draws, a piece of her favorite blanket, an outline of her hand or footprint, her holiday cards, newspapers published on her birthdays, notes from her favorite relatives and anything else you and she want to save. Let your child know this is a special book you want to keep for both of you. Let her only look at it with you so you can keep it from getting torn and dirty.

All too soon, these early years pass. A memory book will help you and your child enjoy remembering these special years.

Research In Brief: Discipline as Guidance

All parents want to discipline their children in ways that encourage them to become cooperative and responsible. Theresa and Frank Caplan of the Princeton Center for Infancy and Early Childhood have this to say about research on discipline. "One of the most widely discussed topics in the field of child behavior covers discipline techniques."



Many years of research and study have gone into most professional opinions. Gradually, trial-and-error child rearing is being replaced by more developmentally and humanistic approaches. Especially reassuring is the fact that the experts are in agreement in many important areas concerning the nurturing of good mental health and sense of responsibility in children. They view discipline as guidance that corrects, molds, strengthens or perfects. It encompasses the child's ongoing learning of socially useful behavior. Discipline is something you do for and with your child, not to him. (Caplan and Caplan 1983, pp. 72-73).



Teaching Values: A Blueprint for Life

Values: The Cornerstones

Your values are the ideas you have about:

- What is important and what is not.
- What is good and what is bad.
- What is right and what is wrong.

You may, for example, think the most worthwhile things in life are honesty and friendship. Or you may pursue wealth and power. You may never even stop to think about your values. Nevertheless, they are there.

They are standing behind your beliefs, attitudes, interests, and goals. They affect:

- What you do with your free time.
- How you spend your money.
- What friends you choose.
- How you dress.
- What you eat.

In other words, your values give meaning and direction to every part of your life.

Experience: The Bricks

Your values have grown out of your experience within certain family and culture. Some families, for example, place a high value on learning. Others think physical fitness is more important. Some cultures stress group cooperation. Others reward individual ambition.

But, most likely, the values you learned as a child have changed over time. As the world has changed, so have your values. As you have grown, so have they.

You have probably found, too, that it is not always easy to decide what is good and bad, right and wrong, true and false. To find out what values work best for you, you have to weigh all the choices. And you have to act on these choices to learn if you are willing to accept the results. The best time to start clarifying values in these ways is in a child's earliest years.

Parents: The Architects

Your values will have a great effect on your children. But your children are picking up other

ideas about values from everyone and everything around them.

Your children may have found that some people hold values that seem strange or even wrong. Without some help from you, your children may be confused about what to believe. They may put down values that are different from their own. Or they may adopt values you feel are dangerous.

To be sure your children form values you want them to have:

- Know what you value.
- Help children think about their values.
- Talk with children about other people's values.

Try to give your children confidence in their values and at the same time respect what others value.

Your children's search for the meaning of values might lead you to ask yourself why you value certain things. It could force you to work through problems you tried to sweep under the rug. In other words, as you help your children build values, you strengthen your own.

Since your children will end up valuing many of the same things as you do, you should look closely at your values:

- Are you proud to pass these values on to your children?
- Do you tell your children what you believe and where you stand?
- Do you explain why you make certain decisions and choices?
- Are your children getting the same messages from both you and your spouse?
- Do you practice what you preach?

Being Firm and Being Loving

Many parents are afraid to be firm with their children. They fear that if they are firm, their children will love them less and will feel less loved by them. This is simply not true. Good discipline is fair, sensitive and consistent, and it is guided by the parents' love and desire to help the child grow. With this kind of discipline, the child will feel loved and valued. The child can



easily understand limits imposed for her own safety, such as not playing with knives. She can also come to understand and accept limits set to keep her from disturbing others or destroying property.

Children need to learn that their rights are important, but no more than the rights of others. If she doesn't learn this now, your toddler may become the kind of child who actually is less lovable.

Singing As a Teaching Tool

It doesn't take an experienced musician to sing with children.

Anyone can sing "Row, Row, Row Your Boat," and make

the motions of rowing your boat. Parents and teachers can learn many singing and musical games, even if they consider themselves as nonmusical.



Music is a great way to engage young children because it is a natural and enjoyable part of their everyday lives. Children hear music or sing while watching television, riding in the car, and as part of bedtime routines. We often hear children creating their own songs or incorporating music into their play. Music is a socially engaging way to learn, and especially appropriate for the developmental levels of young children.

Many young children learn to recite the alphabet by singing the ABC's and educational television programs for young children such as Sesame Street, use a lot of music in their programming. Researchers have found that music can help children learn multiplication tables and improve early literacy skills. Many adults still remember lessons connected to music from their childhood.

Music helps many children break information down into easily remember pieces or associate it with previously known information, such as a familiar song. One study found that using familiar melodies helped five-year-olds learn phone numbers at a faster rate than using no music or unfamiliar melodies.

Singing with children can be an especially fun and valuable experience. When you sing with young children, you can adjust the speed and volume to fit their abilities. You don't need to sound like a professional singer. As long as you're enthusiastic, young children will enjoy it and want to sing along.

Music support self-expression, cooperative play, creativity, emotional well being, and development of social, cognitive, communication and motor skills. Music and singing are a fun and effective way to help young children learn.

Problem Solving Starts Early

One of the most valuable skills we have as adults is the ability to solve problems. Through training and experience, we have learned what is best to do when there is trouble, how to avoid problems or how to fix something that needs to be fixed. Some people go through life solving problems well. Others go through life solving them poorly.

Very young children are learning how to solve problems and developing their own style of problem solving. Whether they learn to solve problems well or not so well depends largely on the help and encouragement they get as toddlers.

Every day, toddlers face problems and have a chance to practice solving



them. For example, suppose Jimmy and Julie are building block houses, but neither has enough blocks to finish. Mother could suggest how they can solve this problem, but it is better if she helps them learn to figure out how to solve the problem themselves. To do this, she can describe what she sees. She can say that they both want to finish their houses and neither has enough blocks. Then she can ask them for ideas on how they might solve the problem. In doing this, she does two important things. She shows them that she expects them to be able to solve problems and she gives them a chance to practice doing so. At first, she might need to help them come up with ideas. Later, they'll be able to do more problem solving on their own.



Nutrition: Some Toddlers Don't Get Enough Iron

The nutrient that is often low in the diet of toddlers is iron. Iron is a very important nutrient for healthy red blood and for energy. You can make sure that your toddler is getting enough iron by giving her foods that are good sources of it.



Look over the list of foods below and ask yourself, "Does my child eat at least two or three of these foods every day?" If he doesn't, he may not be getting enough iron.

Foods with lots of iron include:

- Beans: kidney beans, pinto beans, red beans, great northern beans, blackeye beans, navy beans, small white beans, and lima beans.
- Lentils
- Organ meats like heart and liver
- Sunflower seeds

Foods with some iron include:

- Dried fruit, such as raisins, apricots, and prunes (cut into small pieces to prevent choking)
- Egg yolks
- Enriched macaroni, noodles, and rice
- Enriched breads and cereals
- Beef
- Pork
- Chicken
- Fish
- Nuts (remember to break these into small pieces to prevent choking)
- Split peas
- Spinach, greens, broccoli, and green peas

Vitamin C helps your body use iron, so offer some orange juice when you serve iron rich food. As an infant, your child probably ate iron-fortified baby cereal. To find out if a cereal is high in iron, look for the nutrition label on the side of the box and see how much iron each servings of cereal has. The amount of iron will be given as a percentage of the U.S. RDA (U.S.

Recommended Dietary Allowances). Try to give your child only cereals that have at least 25 percent of the U.S. RDA for iron. Take your child to a medial provider for regular checkups to see if your child is getting all the iron he needs.

Health: Vision Testing

Vision testing should be a part of every child's regular health checkup. A vision test determines each eye's ability to see "sharply". When a child is under 3 years of age, his vision is tested by his ability to follow an object moving from about 12 to 15 inches from his face to a few inches from his nose. Each eye is tested separately, by covering one eye and observing the other eye as it follows the vision tester's finger. At 3 years of age, most children can learn how to take a formal vision screening test. The most widely used vision screening test is called the Snellen Test. It uses a wall chart headed with a large letter E. Some wall charts use pictures of things that are familiar to the child. The child covers each eye in turn and identifies what he can see.

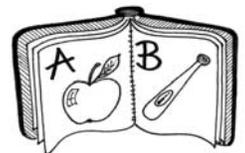


Some toddlers have a "lazy eye." These children need regular scheduled vision tests to make sure that eye problems are identified early. An early discovery, followed by prompt medical care, may prevent permanent loss of vision.

Vision problems often go unnoticed by parents, and since the small child has no knowledge of what good vision is, he does not complain. Your child's ability to see is essential for learning. You can provide your child with a head start for preschool and kindergarten if you make sure his eyesight is normal.

Creating Literacy-Rich Homes

What exactly is a literacy-rich home? This describes a home environment that encourages children to become lifelong readers.



Families can support language learning by creating a home atmosphere in which reading, writing, and talking are a natural part of daily life.



Parents can do a lot of things at home to encourage reading. Reading aloud to your children is only one of them. Another is setting aside regular time for family reading, even just 10-15 minutes a day. And setting a good example – letting your kids see you reading-is very helpful.

Creating a literacy rich home require a good supply of things to read. Newspapers, magazines, books and other reading materials should be within easy reach of the whole family. These materials could include photo albums, cookbooks, and artwork that will encourage conversations and storytelling. It doesn't matter if reading materials are owned or borrowed, new or used – what's important is that they are in your home and a natural part of everyday life.

Books to Enjoy with Your Child

Dimity Duck by Jane Yolen

I Went Walking by Sue Williams

Bear In Sunshine by Stella Blackstone

Butterfly Butterfly by Petr Horacek

Grumpy Bird by Jeremy Tankard

I'm the Biggest Thing In the Ocean by Kevin Sherry

How Far Will the Rubber Band Stretch by Mike Thaler

Max's Chocolate Chicken by Rosemary Wells

Rain Makes Applesauce by Julilan Scheer

Helping Your Child Reduce Stress

As your child grows, she will encounter more and more situations that cause stress. It is not too early to help her learn to recognize and manage stress.

Show your child how to relax by sitting quietly and paying attention to her breathing. Most children like to use their imaginations. Encourage your toddler to think about something calm and pleasant when she is tense: soft rain, a sleeping kitten, a quiet meadow. Help her picture a place she especially likes, a park or a bench, and learn to go to that place in her imagination when she is upset.

By teaching your child to relax, you will be giving her a skill that will help her all her life.

Try some of these ideas yourself. They work for everyone.

Games for Growing

Take Away

Purpose of the Game: To encourage your child's attention to detail and memory.

How to Play: Put several different things on the table or floor. Ask your child to close her eyes as you take one thing away. Then ask her



to open her eyes and guess which one was removed. You can play the game at first using only two items. Later, to make the game harder, you may use more things. Let your child have a turn at taking things away for you to guess which one has been removed. Stop playing when the game is no longer fun for you or your child.

Matching Pairs

Purpose of the Game: To help your child learn how things can be the same or different.

How to Play: Collect pairs of things that are the same, such as two spoons, two bars of soap, two playing cards, two plates, two toothbrushes. Mix sets up, then hold one, and ask your child to pick another just like it. You can take turns at guessing. To make the game more difficult, choose pairs of pictures, numbers, letters, or playing cards and ask your child to match the one you hold up. As always, take turns leading and stop the game before your child loses interest in the game.

Where Is It?

Purpose of the Game: To help a child learn the very important words for position such as "in," "under," "beside," "on top of," "behind," and so on.

How to Play: Ask your child to move something to a different position. For example, using a ball and a basket, ask him to put the ball in the basket, or behind it, or under it, or on top of it. You can ask him to put his hat on his head, beside his head, under his foot, behind his back and so forth.



Homemade Toys That Teach

Costume Box

Purpose: This box of costume makings will encourage your toddler's imagination, creativity, and pretend play.

Materials:

- Large, cardboard box
- Cast-off clothing, hats, scarves, shawls, etc.

Playing: Your toddler will know what to do with this box of costumes; he has lots of imagination. Encourage his pretend play by suggesting people he can pretend to be.

Suggest that he act out characters you've read about in stories or ask you to guess who he is dressed up to represent. Sometimes, he'll enjoy having you dress up and pretend with him.

Look At Me!

Your child is still developing her own idea about who she is. Give her a chance to see and talk about herself with the following activity.

The only special equipment you'll need is a large sheet of paper. Butcher paper works well, and you can probably get a big piece from any butcher shop. Ask your child to lie down on a smooth surface like the floor. Now, use a crayon or marking pen to draw around her from head to toe. Don't forget to draw in between the fingers and around the ears. Get as much detail as possible! When you have finished the outline, you and your child can fill it in. Name the body parts and items of clothing as you color them. Let your child look in a mirror so she can draw her eyes, nose and mouth onto the picture. Don't be afraid to be imaginative! Green hair is okay! When your child's picture is finished, hang it up where everyone can admire it. You can repeat this activity every few months, or at each birthday, so you can see changes and talk about them: "See how much bigger you are getting?" or "Your hair is getting longer!" or "You are wearing a dress here."

Magic Closet

The magic closet (or box or basket) is a place full of happy surprises for your child. You can rotate your child's toys through the magic closet. You can bring out one thing at a time

when your child is sick, or bored on a rainy day, or when you and she need something very special to do. Children like to rediscover old toys. A few new toys can be kept in the magic closet, too. Surprises are fun for everyone, and you will enjoy seeing your child playing with her magic closet discoveries.

Pretend Cooking

Make your little one a pretend stove by drawing burners on the bottom of a large cardboard carton. Your toddlers will especially like to play at cooking if you play with him. He'll take your orders for food, cook the food, hand it to you and hope you will enjoy eating it.



Pearl of Wisdom

Building Strong, Healthy Families

Do you ever catch yourself saying things to your children that you promised your parents, "I'll never say that to my kid when I'm grown up?" Parenting is learned from our parents, and the many other adults we have encountered in our lives. We also see and hear examples of parenting in the public domain. Some are good, some are not so good! In our parenting reality, all of those experiences become the ingredients in a crock pot of strategies that explode out of our mouths when our kids have us backed against a wall. Some are good, some are not so good! Raising children is much more challenging than we ever expected before we had them!

Healthy Families are built. You are the architect and builder. You are the parent now! It's your turn to create all those traits that you dreamt about growing up. Start by casting out any behaviors that are not supportive, respectful, and loving. The foundation of a healthy family is built from the values and morals of the parents and is enriched and supported by culture and community.

So then, what are the characteristics of a Healthy Family? A number of years ago, columnist and author Delores Curran wrote "Traits of a Healthy Family". She surveyed over 500 family professionals (teachers, doctors, parents, leaders and social workers) and came up with a list of 15 primary



characteristics of a Healthy Family. The traits are listed below:

1. Communicates with and listens to each other.
2. Affirms and supports one another.
3. Teaches respect for others.
4. Develops a sense of trust for each other.
5. Has a sense of play and humor.
6. Exhibits a sense of shared responsibility.
7. Teaches a sense of right and wrong.
8. Has a strong sense of family in which rituals and traditions abound.
9. Has a balance of interaction among members.
10. Has a shared religious core.
11. Respects the privacy of one another.
12. Values service to others.
13. Fosters family table time and conversation.
14. Shares leisure time.
15. Admits to and seeks help with problems.

These traits are listed in the order of their importance from this study. What is critical is that each family identifies its own strengths, and then adds focus to the others as they "fit" with your family's development. How long has it been since you spent a few moments just thinking about the strengths of your family? Take time today and identify your family's strengths and celebrate them often.



Now here's the creative, fun part...you, 'lil 'ole you, get to be and act and do as you want to see your family be and act and do! If you want to adopt a trait from the list above, you and your partner need to talk and talk and agree upon the why it is a value worthy of adopting and how you will do it, show it and reinforce it. The adults must be solid on their commitment, honor what is important to the other and stand strong in times of kid trials.

Values are learned. Learning something new takes practice. That means the concept of a particular value must be "unpacked" so that the elements of the value can be taught bit by bit as kids are ready. For example, respect is a value. What is respect? Defining the concept of respect is difficult, but if you pause a moment and "unpack" the elements of respect you will find the specific behaviors that represent respectful actions. Opening or holding a door is respectful, and it is thoughtful and kind. Thoughtful and kind actions add up to a respectful behavior. Children need us to "unpack" the values we want them to learn and assign words and teach the behaviors necessary to live out the value.

Healthy Families are intentional about sharing and teaching the values they want to pass on to their kids. Healthy Families are engineered by skilled architects who take the time to develop each trait over time.

Happy Building!

Vicki Thrasher Cronin

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Questions and Answers

Q. My little girl is 33 months old and uses a lot of words now, but I've noticed that when she is tense, she stutters. What can I do about this?

A. Your daughter, like all toddlers her age, is learning language fast. She is learning about 10 to 15 new words each week, but she may not be learning words as fast as she wants to use them. She wants to make herself understood, but sometimes she simply doesn't know all the words she needs to do this. This can cause her to stutter, especially when she is upset or excited or when those she is talking to try to rush her.



The best thing you can do to help your daughter overcome her stuttering is to be patient and relaxed with her. Don't rush her speech or criticize her stuttering. It is not easy to learn language. If her stuttering persists in spite of your patience and help, discuss it with her medical provider.

Sources

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White, B.L. (1985). *The First Three Years of Life*. New Jersey: Prentice-Hall Press.

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Suggested Reading

The Magic Years: Understanding and Handling the Problems of Early Childhood by Selma Frauberg (1984), New York: Scribner.

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Remember, this fact sheet describes a typical child at each age. Each child is special and each child develops at his or her own pace. Perfectly normal children may do things earlier or later than those described in this fact sheet. If you are concerned about your child's development, see your medical provider.

This fact sheet gives equal time and space to both sexes. That's why we take turns referring to children as "he" or "she." When we use he or she, we include all children. Fathers, partners, and other significant adults all play an important role during pregnancy and in childrearing. When we specifically refer to "fathers," the information may also apply to partners and/or other significant adults involved in childrearing.

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